

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 COME-00 AGR-05 STR-04 TAR-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 L-03 DOTE-00 FTC-01

JUSE-00 /043 W

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R 071836Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4995

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PASS AGRICULTURE FOR MANNION, L&LP/MD, FAS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR/FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH RESTRICTIONS ON HORSEMEAT IMPORTS

1. AGATT AND ECON OFFICERS HAVE RECEIVED COMPLAINTS FROM FRENCH IMPORTERS OF U.S. HORSEMEAT, FROM REP OF AIR CARRIER OF PRODUCT FROM U.S. (TWA), AND FROM OWNER OF PACKING COMPANY IN HARTFORD, CONN (R. CORN, M&R PACKING CO.). ALL COMPLAINTS HAVE IN COMMON OBJECTIONS TO APPARENT ACTIONS BY GOF TO MOVE FROM LICENSING REQUIREMENT FOR HORSEMEAT IMPORTS INTO FRANCE TO ACTUAL LIMITING OF LICENSES WHICH WILL HAVE EFFECT OF RESTRICTING ENTRY OF U.S. PRODUCT, AT LEAST DURING REMAINDER 1975.

2. IN RESPONSE TO REPORT FROM ONE FRENCH IMPORTER THAT HE HAD BEEN ADVISED BY GOF TO EFFECT THAT ALL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE U.S. BUT EXCLUDING THE U.S.S.R., HAD AGREED TO A "GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT" TO LIMIT HORSEMEAT EXPORTS TO FRANCE, WE REPLIED THAT SUCH A REQUEST HAD BEEN RECEIVED BUT NO REPEAT NO AFFIRMATIVE REPLY HAD EVEN BEEN SENT A SUBSEQUENT CALL TO COLLIN OF THE DREE CONFIRMED THAT THIS WAS ALSO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS. COLLIN SAID HE WOULD LOOK

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FURTHER INTO THIS MATTER WITH AGMIN OFFICIALS WHO MAY

HAVE TAKEN UNCOORDINATED ACTIONS ON OWN INITIATIVE.

3. IF RESTRICTIONS ARE ACTUALLY IMPOSED FOLLOWING PROBLEMS LIKELY TO ARISE: A. VARIOUS IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS WILL CLAIM UNFAIR TREATMENT SINCE IT APPEARS THAT RESTRICTED IMPORT LICENSES WILL BE ALLOTTED ON BASIS OF IMPORT LEVELS OF ONE YEAR AGO. SOME SUBSTANTIAL IMPORTERS DEVELOPED BUSINESS ONLY IN LAST PART OF 1975 (SPECIFICALLY THE HARTFORD EXPORTERS AND FRENCH IMPORTERS OF PRODUCT FROM THE HARTFORD PLANT). AN EQUITABLE BASIS FOR ALLOCATION WOULD BE HARD TO FIND. B. AN UNDETERMINED BUT APPARENTLY SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF U.S. PRODUCT ENTERS FRANCE FROM OTHER EC COUNTRIES SUCH AS BELGIUM AND NETHERLANDS. THIS MEAT MIGHT NOT BE USED IN CALCULATING TOTAL AMOUNT ALLOTTED TO INDIVIDUAL IMPORTERS OR TO U.S. C. WITH NO RESTRICTIONS ON LIVE HORSE IMPORTS, CHILLED CARCASS SHIPMENTS FROM U.S. AND CANADA WOULD LIKELY BE REPLACED TO SUBSTANTIAL EXTENT BY LIVE HORSE IMPORTS FROM POLAND, U.S.S.R., EAST AND WEST GERMANY, AND YUGOSLAVIA, TO MENTION LARGEST SUPPLIERS AND POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS OF LIVE HORSES

4. AS BACKGROUND, WE SUPPLY SOME OF IMPORTERS COMMENTS ON SITUATION: AGMIN CLAIMS THAT RESTRICTIONS DESIGNED TO HELP FRENCH HORSEMEAT PRODUCERS AND FARMERS. HOWEVER, FRENCH SUPPLY IS ACTUALLY SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW DEMAND AND AGMIN SHRUGGED OFF OFFER OF PACKER TO BUY LARGE AMOUNT OF DOMESTIC HORSES TO INSURE MARKET. LARGEST IMPORTER OF POLISH AND RUSSIAN HORSES REPORTEDLY JEAN DOUMENG, FRANCE'S WELL KNOWN COMMUNIST WHO CONCURRENTLY CONTROLS WIDE VARIETY SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL INTERESTS. DOUMENG

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CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 L-03 DOTE-00 FTC-01

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REPORTEDLY SELLS MOST IMPORTS TO A MONSIEUR VANHOLBEKE OF NORTHERN FRAHCE AREA WHO USED TO BE IMPORTER OF HORSEMEAT FROM CURRENTLY BANKRUPT BALTIC CORPORATION OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS, AND NOW IMPORTS FROM OTHER U.S. SOURCES AS WELL AS FROM EAST. IN ADDITION, TRADE SOURCE REASONS THAT UNFAVORABLE BILATERAL TRADE BALANCE BETWEEN U.S.S.R. AND FRANCE HAS RESULTED IN FRENCH YIELDING TO SOVIET PRESSURE TO OPEN MARKET TO ITS HORSES. HIS IMPRESSION IS THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY OPPOSES RESTRICTIONS WHILE AGMIN OFFICIALS, AT LEAST AT WORKING LEVEL, FAVOR THROWING MARKET TO EAST AT EXPENSE OF U.S.

5. TRADE SOURCE ASKED THAT REPRESENTATIONS BE MADE TO EMBASSY OF FRANCE IN WASHINGTON, AND SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT AMERICAN INDUSTRY LODGING COMPLAINTS WITH U.S.G. IN WASHINGTON FOR THIS PURPOSE. HOWEVER, WE ALREADY DISCUSSED THIS WITH COLLIN (SEE PAR. 2). WE ALSO RAISED ISSUE INFORMALLY ON NOVEMBER 7 DURING MEETING PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED BY AUBERGER OF AGMIN TO DISCUSS OTHER MATTERS. WE STATED OUR CONCERN OVER IMPOSITION OF ANY RESTRICTIONS WHEN IT WAS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT SUPPLY OF FRENCH HORSES WAS VERY LOW. WE ALSO INDICATED OUR CONCERN THAT RESTRICTIONS ONLY ON MEAT WOULD BE DISCRIMINATORY TO U.S. FUR-
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THERMORE, WE MENTIONED PROBLEM OF EQUITABLE APPORTIONMENT OF MARKET AND DANGER OF INDUCING BANKRUPCY OF U.S. FIRMS ORGANIZED TO SUPPLY FRENCH MARKET. AUBERGER AND REVEL SAID THAT THEY WOULD LOOK INTO THIS MATTER BUT THAT OBJECTIVE OF REDUCING IMPORTS AT END OF YEAR WAS SIMPLY TO SUPPORT MARKET DURING PERIOD OF HEAVY SEASONAL SUPPLY IN FRANCE. THEY ADDED THAT THIS WOULD ALSO HELP TO KEEP PRICE UP FOR U.S. PRODUCT AND THAT, IN ANY CASE, FRANCE HAD NO INTENTION OF AND DID NOT WANT TO ELIMINATE NEEDED SOURCE OF HORSEMEAT FROM U.S.

6. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO MAKE CONCERNS KNOWN TO EMBASSY OF FRANCE AT WASHINGTON AND TO SEEK CLARIFICATION AS TO WHETHER GOF ACTUALLY PLANS TO RESTRICT LICENSE ISSUANCE, TO WHAT EXTENT, WHETHER THIS WILL APPLY TO BOTH

HORSEMEAT AND TO LIVE HORSES, HOW LICENSES WILL BE APPOR-
TIONED TO AVOID DISCRIMINATION AMONG COMPANIES AND AMONG
NATIONS, AND WHETHER ALL RESTRICTIONS WILL DEFINITELY END
ON JANUARY 1 IF THEY ARE IMPOSED AT ALL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEATS, IMPORT LICENSES, TRADE COMPLAINTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS29121
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750388-0245
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751163/aaaaceps.tel
Line Count: 174
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <28 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH RESTRICTIONS ON HORSEMEAT IMPORTS
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, EPAP, FR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006